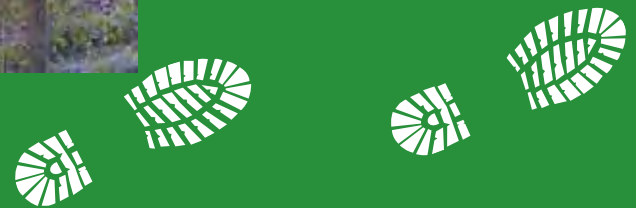


Ranger Explorer Activity Guide

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Shenandoah National Park



THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL



For Ages 13+

The Appalachian Trail Experience.

- Solitude.** You gain a ridgecrest and all you hear is wind rustling through leaves, the creak of tree limbs, and the pulse of your own heart after your climb.
- Views.** You step onto an outcropping far above the mists rising from a winding creek, you reach a peak and the valley opens out beneath you, or you stand above a gorge and see purple-blue mountain ridges fade toward a distant horizon.
- Challenge.** You top the ridgeline by your own unaided effort, following a trail that runs from crest to valley in a constant challenge to your fitness and determination.
- Opportunity.** You live at a deliberate pace, encountering nature without filters, where you can focus on one simple activity, with time for thought and self-discovery. You live in self reliance and simplicity, realizing what the “civilized” world is missing.
- History.** You walk through monuments to America’s history, and battlefields that decided its destiny, discovering the very land that shaped those crucial moments in a way you never could by just reading roadside historical markers.
- Land and Culture.** You emerge from a forested ridge to the farms and villages of the Great Appalachian Valley, or the humble mill towns along a New England river.
- Nature.** From mouse to moose to mockingbird, from flower to fern to fir tree, you come to know the wild things in a setting no zoo, film, or backyard birdfeeder can recreate.



AT AT A GLANCE.

This program will take approximately 3-4 hours to complete, including the hike to Rock Spring Cabin and back.



Activity #1 Getting Started.

This activity can be done anywhere.

- Learn about the history and management of the Appalachian Trail from the “AT” map/brochure.



Activity #2 One Man’s Journal.

This activity can be done anywhere.

- Read a real AT journal and answer questions.



Activity #3 Hike the AT!

This activity is done on Stony Man summit.

- Hike the AT to Rock Spring Cabin, 1.6 miles round trip. (see map on back cover)
- Take field notes.
- Write about the place.



Activity #4 A Living Legacy.

This activity is done at the end of your trail.

- Read about AT cabin at the cabin on your trail.
- Answer questions listed for this activity.



Activity #5 Express Yourself.

- Write your own journal entry.
- Write or draw.



Activity #6 Impacts on the AT.

This activity can be done anywhere.

- Evaluate the importance of environmental protection.

Upon completion of this booklet, take it to Byrd Visitor Center to review it with a Park Ranger and receive your AT pin, medallion, or patch, and certificate.

Ready. Set. Hike...



Activity #1

Getting Started.



Use the Appalachian Trail brochure to answer the following questions.

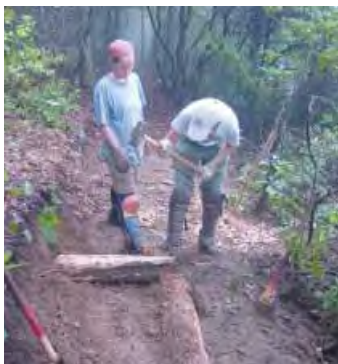


When was the trail built and who built it?

When did one continuous trail open?

What is the purpose of the AT?

What is the goal of the National Trail System Act?



Who monitors and maintains the trail and its shelters and helps with operations at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) at its headquarters in Harper's Ferry, WV?

Which local AT club maintains the trail in Shenandoah?
(it is NORTH of Shenandoah National Park)



How many miles of the trail are in Shenandoah National Park?

How many states will you pass through on a “thru-hike”?



Activity #2

One Man's Journey.



This activity can be done anywhere. Read the following journal entries.



When signed, this single-visit permit authorizes:		CAMPSITE NAME	ZONE— SITE	NIGHTS
NAME	Joe Hiker	AT Thru-Hiker		1
ADDRESS	123 Maple Ave			
CITY	Anytown VA 02805			
To visit				
Give best estimate of start and finish dates	FROM MONDAY 0507 THROUGH MONDAY 0511			
Location of entry	Rockfish Gap			
Location of exit	Front Royal			
Primary method of travel				
Number of people in group	03	REMARKS		
Number of pack or saddle stock		DATE 5/2/07		
Number of watercraft or other craft		DATE RFES		

Hi Everyone,

My name is Paul Magnanti. On a Boy Scout camping trip in 1986, when I was thirteen-years old, I climbed Mt. Lafayette in New Hampshire and fell in love with mountains. On the summit I saw a series of white marks painted on the trees, and learned that they were called “blazes.” They mark the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia. I yearned to discover where the white blazes led. Twelve years later I “thru-hiked” the entire 2,160 miles of the AT in 5 months. My trail name is “Magaroni.” Here is my journal from the part of my trip through Shenandoah National Park.

May 2 -5. (AT Mile 818.5)

Went into Waynesboro to pick up my mail drop. By the time we shuttled back, the dark clouds opened up with torrential downpours. Seems I won't leave here today after all.

May 6. (AT Mile 831.6 - Paul Wolfe Memorial Shelter)

Finally escaped! After three days of not hiking I was definitely dragging. But, by the end of the day, the familiar rhythm was back. At this shelter a family with an eleven-year-old is having a blast. I hope he realizes how lucky he is to experience such an adventure.

May 7. (AT Mile 849.6 - Campsite in Shenandoah)

A blanket of fog covered the woods. Before long I was in a torrential downpour, so pitching my tent seemed like the best option. Sometimes it is good to have some time alone. The sound of rain on a tent is very relaxing. I am beginning to believe that flexibility, not mileage done in a day is the key to enjoy hiking on the AT.

May 8. (AT Mile 869.6 - Pinefield Hut)

At 4 a.m., lightning that could light up Fenway Park flashed. The thunder sounded like two freight trains colliding. I saw my first rainbow this trip, with the mountains forming a backdrop. A mini-van pulled up and out popped a woman wanting to know if I was “one of those people who actually hike to Maine.” I was offered a soda. The caffeine boost made the last 1.5 miles into camp a bit easier. Alone tonight, a pleasure...the nearby brook and a clear sky should induce slumber.



Activity #2

One Man's Journey.



May 9. (AT Mile 890.5 - Bearfence Mountain Hut)

Level ridge-walking and a very foggy day make for a less than exciting hike. Immediately upon my arrival at the hut, I was offered BBQ chicken, a beer and toasted marshmallows by these guys out for the weekend. When I removed my socks, the top of my toes looked like Hamburger Helper. Hiking 21 miles in wet socks is not the best way to take care of feet. Dry boots and socks are two things that can be difficult to get at times.

May 10. (AT Mile 906.6 – Skyland)

Sunday tourists and grubby thru-hikers make for an odd combination. Grabbing lunch at Big Meadows, I was a bit out of place in clothes that have not been washed in over a week. Won't even mention what impression my stench made in this restaurant. I was able to call my Mom today and wish her a Happy Mother's Day. This day ended on a great note, literally. John Lee Hooker was playing on the radio in my room. My first time listening to the blues in over two months. Too bad my blues collection is too heavy and bulky to put in my pack.

May 11. (AT Mile 917.3 - Pass Mountain Hut)

Short day today. Somehow the motive to do big mileage is in direct proportion to two things: 1) amount of sunlight, 2) closeness of town or restaurant. Since I already had a big breakfast at Skyland, I had my restaurant fix. The sun was non-existent today, so making mileage to see a foggy view somehow did not hold any great incentive. But every day has something to offer, you just have to find the good in it. At the shelter tonight a woman named Sue, and her daughter Melissa, filled me up with their extra food—tapioca pudding, Little Debbie Snacks, and gummi bears! Great conversation...

May 12. (AT Mile 941.0 - Tom Floyd Wayside)

I was definitely in "granny gear" this morning. Hiking in the cold drizzle was not appealing; just getting out of the bed is the hard part. I finally crawled out of my nice, warm sleeping bag, ate breakfast, and moved on... My last day in Shenandoah was an easy one; just too bad all I saw was fog. There was a neat looking tunnel of mountain laurel that almost made up for the lack of views. A blackberry shake at Elkwallow wayside was wonderful... mmmmmmm...





Activity #2

One Man's Journey.



Paul's AT Journal



What was his total mileage for this section? _____

What was his daily average for this section? _____

What were some of Paul's challenges and/or sacrifices?

What did he learn?

What were some unexpected or special moments?



If you were to hike the entire trail, what would your goals be?

What would be most challenging for you?

What would you miss the most?

Turn the page to read Paul's final journal entry of his 2,160 mile journey . . .



Activity #2

One Man's Journey.



Paul's Final Journal Entry



August 1. (AT Mile 2160.7 – Katahdin, Maine)

My hike of the AT is over. No more white blazes to follow. The AT will always be a part of me. I will remember the crunch of fresh snow under my boots, the way the sun feels after many days of rain. The joy a cold soda can bring from a complete stranger. The daily rhythm of hiking that seems to bring tranquility. I have pushed myself physically, mentally, and emotionally these past five months. It was not easy to do. But the rewards are many. Horizons are now limitless, what can and cannot be done is redefined. These past five months I have learned more about myself than I thought I could know. I now have a better idea of who Paul Magnanti is. The memories and experiences of the trial will always be a part of me. Climbing to Katahdin may have ended this journey, but in my heart and thoughts, I will still be on the trail. —Paul

Do you think people need the Appalachian Trail? Why?



What do hikers gain from it?

Why might it be important to even those who do not hike it?



If you were to thru-hike the AT, what is the one “comfort” item (not necessary to meet your basic needs) will you bring? (music, stuffed animal, binoculars, book of poetry, etc.)

You can read more of Paul's journal at: www.pmag.com



Activity #3

On the Trail.



Hike the AT to Rock Spring Cabin. (See map on back cover.)

Put yourself in the boots of an AT thru-hiker. You would have to hike at least 10 miles per day to get to Maine before winter sets in. You don't have a lot of time to stop to identify flowers, birds, insects, etc.—besides, you can't carry heavy guidebooks. If anything unique stands out, sights or sounds, you might want to jot down to remember and write about in your journal at night such as:

- · Unusual rock outcrops, cliffs, ravines, scenic views, rivers, creeks, unique trees, shrubs or plants.
- · Animals and/or their signs: tracks, scat, nests, burrows, calls.
- · Weather: rain, fog, sunny, hot, etc.
- · Signs of humans on the landscape. About half way in, look for apple trees, a sign that this was once an orchard.

Field Notes:





Activity #4

A Living Legacy.



Just downhill from the AT shelter, there is an AT cabin.

Find a place to sit . .
Do not approach the cabin if it is occupied,
but sit nearby or back
at the shelter. Read the
following and answer the
questions.

The Rock Spring Cabin and the “CCC.”

This cabin was built in the early 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, one of the most popular of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal programs. The CCC put unemployed young men to work in parks and forests around the nation. The first “CCC Boys” arrived in the area in 1933. Soon approximately 1,000 of them were based at six camps within the soon-to-be-established national park.

The “CCC Boys” improved the newly completed Appalachian Trail; they had to move about 35 miles of the trail to make way for Skyline Drive. The boys built overlooks, stonewalls, and guardrails; they cleared trails, built campgrounds and picnic areas, and fought the occasional forest fires. The AT cabins they built are a living and lasting legacy to their hard work and dedication.

“The CCC showed me a lot of rights and wrongs, it grew me up, grew a bit faster than I would have otherwise. It kept me out of trouble . . It showed me how to gain responsibility, get out and fend for myself in a proper way.” George Moody Jr.





Activity #4

A Living Legacy.



Just downhill from the AT shelter, there is an AT cabin.



List some challenges the workers may have encountered in building this cabin?

If you were on the CCC crew that built this cabin, what would you enjoy about the job? Not enjoy?

Do you think it is important to preserve these cabins? Why?





Activity #5

Your Journal.



All walkers become philosophers . . . something happens to the walker who knows how to think and observe as he goes."

*D.C. Peattie,
The Appalachian
Trail Reader*

Trail Name: _____

Date: _____

Location: Shenandoah National Park, VA.

Trail Section: _____

The unique or special things I saw.

What was great, what picked me up:
(weather, sights, sounds, smells, other people, etc.)

The challenging part of the hike was:
(weather, gear, terrain, etc.)

Today I felt:

Why the AT is important to ME?



Activity #5

Express Yourself.



Write about this place.
(in story, poem, song,
description, other
expressions)

-or-

Sketch the cabin or a part
of it.

6

Activity #6

Impacts on the Appalachian Trail.



Urban sprawl.

Populations of some AT states have doubled since 1940.
How do you think this affects the AT?

Roads.



About 40% of the AT is located in eight national forests.
How do you think new rules allowing new roads into national forests affect the AT?

Commercial Development.

Logging and mining operations have long pervaded Appalachian land. Now wind towers and telecommunication towers impact the Trail.



The Endless Energy Company proposes to build an extensive series of windmills for electricity production in direct view of one of the Trail's most scenic sections in western Maine. The towers, as high as 40 story buildings, would be visible for about four days of hiking. Strobe beacons at night would alert airplanes to their presence. Forested ridge tops would be clear-cut in places, 12 miles of road built, and 10 miles of transmission lines installed.

What might the affect on AT hikers be?

On the wildlife?

Noise/Light Pollution.

How might traffic, lawnmowers and leaf blowers, and city lights affect the AT?



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Ranger Explorer Certificate

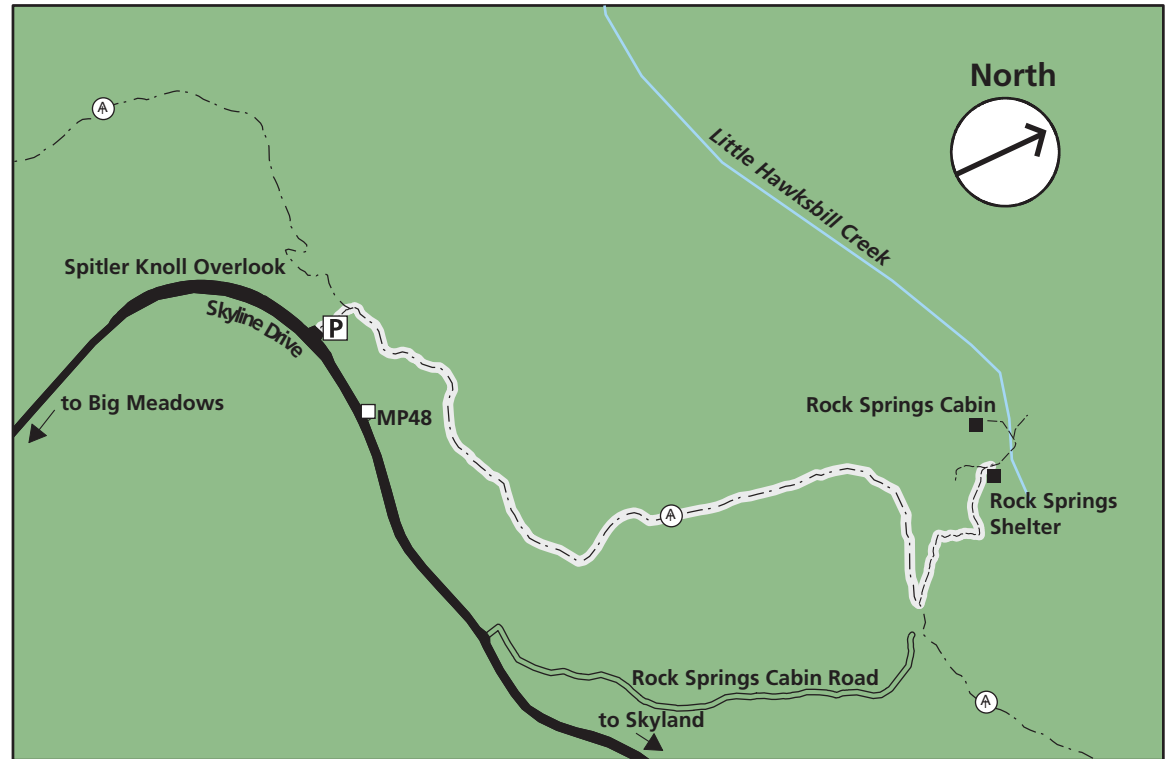
*has completed all of the requirements for becoming a Shenandoah National Park Explorer Ranger
and pledges to protect all national parks for future generations.*

Park Ranger

Date



Mile 48.06, HIKE: Spitler Knoll OL to Rock Spring Shelter



Park at Spitler Knoll Overlook. Mile 48.1; 1.6 miles round trip. The first .1 mile will have blue blazes until you get on the AT; then the blazes will be white. After .6 miles you will leave the AT (blazes will be blue again) to drop down to the cabin. Retrace your steps to return to parking lot.



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